



House Select Committee on Homeland Security Democrats

JIM TURNER, Ranking Member

www.house.gov/hsc/democrats/

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 14, 2004

Contact: Moira Whelan

(202) 226-8827

DEMOCRATS INTRODUCE PRIVATE SECTOR PREPAREDNESS ACT

Bill Implements Findings of 9-11 Commission

In advance of the findings of the 9-11 Commission, Congressman Jim Turner, Ranking Member of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, and other Democrats introduced a bill today that mandates the Department of Homeland Security work more closely with private industry to guard against disaster and terrorist attack.

In its forthcoming report, the 9-11 Commission will recommend that the private sector take steps to ensure preparedness for all disasters and emergencies, including acts of terrorism. The legislation introduced by Turner and Democrats on the Homeland Security Committee will enhance the nation's security by providing the private sector with the tools they need to protect their employees, their facilities, and the continuity of economic activity.

The Private Sector Preparedness Act will:

- Require DHS to develop and implement a comprehensive program to enhance private sector preparedness for emergencies and disasters;
- Identify specific elements of this preparedness program, consistent with recent guidance issued by national voluntary standards organizations such as the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA);
- Require DHS to develop and regularly update national voluntary consensus standards for private sector emergency preparedness; and
- Require DHS to coordinate this preparedness program with, and utilize the voluntary standards developed by, ANSI, NFPA, and any other existing guidance or best practices developed by private sector industry associations.

“On September 11, many companies lacked evacuation plans. Businesses did not have the ability to identify who was working that day, or business continuity plans to resume their operations following the attacks,” said Turner.

“While there may be a keen interest in promoting emergency preparedness within private sector organizations, many still companies don’t know what steps to take to be prepared,” continued Turner. **“This bill will enhance current DHS business preparedness initiatives, and will ensure the recommendations of the 9-11 Commission are put into place by requiring DHS to help American businesses be better prepared for disasters.”**

The benefits of national preparedness standards were praised by Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge in his testimony before the 9/11 Commission.

###

